

Distinguished members of the Public Safety & Security Committee:

My name is Richard Souza. I am from East Hartford. I am testifying today, February 23, 2023, in **support** of:

H.B. No. 6684 An Act Excluding Certain Target Shooting Pistols From Provisions On Assault Weapons

Honestly, I thought an exclusion for firearms used by competitors had been included in the semiautomatic partial firearms ban of April 1, 2013. It's appalling that a person can train for years prior to April 1, 2013 to represent our state in national competitions and our country in international competitions, and then find out on April 2, 2013 that doing so would make him or her a felon. What a disgrace.

But this is what happens when laws are passed that ban firearms based on cosmetic appearances. The rifles used by Olympic biathlon athletes do not look like anything one commonly sees in a firearms store. Neither do some of the pistols used in competitions. The stocks and frames on these firearms often make them look like something out of the future. The extra grips or forward magazine wells on these firearms are there to provide increased balance and stability of the firearm. Because, after you've skied cross country for five miles, and your heart is pounding frantically, unslinging your rifle and making a precise shot on a target is not easy. Holding a pistol out in front of you and making precise shots one after another under scrutiny is hard. Most of us couldn't do it. It takes an athlete.

The people who compete with these firearms are not criminals. I have never heard of any of these competition firearms being used in a crime. They are not readily available, and they are very expensive. That puts them out of the reach of common criminals. Let these honest competitors have their target shooting pistols, and let them represent our state with honor.